



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2020

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LIGHTFOOT URGES RESIDENTS TO USE SMART911 TO PROVIDE CRITICAL INFORMATION TO ASSIST FIRST RESPONDERS AMID COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Free, secure service allows residents to self-identify for first responders if they are under quarantine or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms

CHICAGO – To better assist first responders responding to emergencies during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) Executive Director Rich Guidice today urged Chicago's residents to sign up for [Smart911](#), a free, voluntary and secure service that allows individuals and families to provide critical medical information when they call 9-1-1. By creating a [Safety Profile](#) that is automatically displayed to the 9-1-1 call taker, the service allows residents to self-identify to first responders if they are under quarantine or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Use of this feature on the new and improved Smart911 app will better ensure Chicago's firefighters, paramedics and police officers have the information they need to ensure a safe and swift response.

"Each and every day, our Chicago police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel collectively answer the call to service, and by using OEMC's Smart911 service, they'll be better-equipped to respond to emergencies and keep our residents safe," said Mayor Lightfoot. "During this unprecedented health crisis, it's our duty to support our first responders and ensure they have the resources and information they need to do their job safely and effectively. That's why I urge all residents to utilize this service and fulfill that commitment."

Approximately 75% of 9-1-1 calls are made using cellular phones that lack detailed location information. By signing up for Smart911, residents – especially vulnerable populations – can include any information they might want 9-1-1 and first responders to have in the event of an emergency, including critical health information and pre-existing medical conditions to ensure that first responders can deploy appropriate resources. For residents or visitors who may be deaf, hard of hearing or nonverbal, a 9-1-1 operator can initiate a two-way text message when they view the individual's Safety Profile and see a notification that text is preferred.

"As the coronavirus continues to be a major public health concern, we are doing everything we can to prepare, respond, and mitigate risk to those in our community who need assistance," said Rich Guidice, OEMC Executive Director. "With this rapidly evolving



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



situation, having the information provided in a Smart911 Safety Profile enables us to know who is at the greatest risk in our community so that we can be proactive and provide critical updates based on their location and health history. We urge the residents of Chicago to take action, sign up for Smart911, and help us address the coronavirus outbreak.”

The Chicago Fire Department has worked closely with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CPDH) to ensure all firefighters and paramedics responding to these emergency calls have been provided with personal protective equipment – or PPE – specially designated to keep them safe during this time. With enhanced awareness regarding COVID-19, individuals and first responders have vital information to take proper precautions.

“In these times of crisis, our paramedics need as much information as quickly as possible that will help us help you in the case of an emergency,” said Chicago Fire Commissioner Richard C. Ford II. “We urge all residents to sign up for Smart911 so that our first responders have as much information about a caller as possible, which will not only ensure the health and safety of the individual but also our emergency responders as well.”

Through the Smart911 App, individuals quarantined can receive check-in messages on their health status and receive alerts from CDPH to receive the most-up-to-date information on COVID-19 preventative and preparation measures. City and public health officials continue to encourage everyone to take the following measures in order to ensure health and wellness for the general public:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, countertops and phones.

“As we continue our work to contain the spread of COVID19, it’s more important than ever that our first responders have the information they need to help residents in emergencies,” said CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady. “By using Smart911, individuals can help paramedics and EMTs know who is at high risk, in quarantine or has health conditions so that they are better equipped to provide medical aid and support.”

To date, a total of 16,679 residents have pre-registered for Smart911 in Chicago. Today’s announcement builds on Mayor Lightfoot’s #StayHomeSaveLives campaign that was launched this week to ensure that Chicagoans follow the statewide ‘Stay at Home’ order to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health and safety of all residents.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



To sign up, visit www.smart911.com or download the Smart911 app in the Apple Store or Google Play. For more information and updates on COVID-19, text COVID19 to 78015, email coronavirus@chicago.gov or visit Chicago.gov/coronavirus.

#